

THE  
**SHEKEL**

שֶׁקֶל



VOLUME XLV

NO. 2

MARCH-APRIL 2011



IN **CHINA**



Plus:

- *The ghosts of Libya*
- *Jews in Oklahoma*
- *Shanghai's Jewish Refugee Museum*
- *Israel's stunning world fair pavilion*

Published by the American Israel Numismatic Association, Inc.

# THE SHEKEL

VOLUME XLIV NO. 1 (CONS. NO 236)

MARCH-APRIL 2011

ANDREW PERALA, EDITOR

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# American Israel Numismatic Association

Website: [www.theshekel.org](http://www.theshekel.org)

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# NOMINATIONS, DESIGNS NEEDED

I sincerely thank the Board of Directors for granting a Complimentary Life Membership to me, as well as Dr. Morton Brookler. We are the only two regular members with membership numbers under 100, who have been continuous AINA members since 1968. We join the distinguished company of the previously named Complimentary Life Members—long time Board Member and Treasurer Florence Schuman and Israeli token expert Ady Bar-Tov.

I have appointed an Election Committee with Oded Paz as Chairman, and members Sagi Salomon and myself.

I invite AINA members who would like to run for the Board of Directors and who meet the qualifications in our bylaws to e-mail me at [ainapresident@gmail.com](mailto:ainapresident@gmail.com) within 30 days of receiving this Shekel.

The bylaws—which can be read at [www.theshekel.org/aina-by-laws](http://www.theshekel.org/aina-by-laws)—indicate that: “Each Director must be natural persons eighteen years of age or older. A Director must have been a member of the Association for at least three consecutive years prior to being nominated for election. A nominee must obtain nominations from at least three other current members of the Association. The Election Committee shall review the nominations submitted and determine whether the potential candidate is qualified to serve as a Director of the Association.”

In addition, board members are asked to attend the annual board meeting held at the summer convention of the American Numismatic Association.

The three present Directors whose

terms expire this year are Josh Prottas, Roger Merritt and Dr. Ira Rezak, all of whom have indicated they will be running for reelection.

It is also time to choose the design for the 2012 AINA medal—that will be given as a gift to all AINA members next year.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

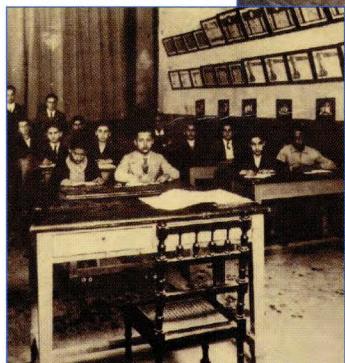
The design, on an appropriate Judaic or Israel theme, must be submitted in solid black and white, where black indicates the raised frosty design and white represents the shiny field. Please submit within 60 days of receiving this Shekel to AINA, P.O. Box 20255, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269 or email to [ainapresident@gmail.com](mailto:ainapresident@gmail.com).

In addition to offering the first year Junior Membership in AINA free to teenagers (13-19) thanks to the generosity of the Kittridge Numismatic Foundation, an AINA member, who wishes to remain anonymous, has offered to sponsor the second year membership of Juniors. So you have the opportunity of giving a gift of two years of membership in AINA to any teenager.

Send us the names and addresses, along with their ages, of your teenage children, grandchildren, etc. You will give them the gift of knowledge and possibly an enjoyable lifetime hobby.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mel".

# The Ghosts



## of Libya

*Above, right: A recent photograph shows the shell of a former Talmud School in Libya. Above left, a pre-World War II photo of a Synagogue class in Benghazi; student photo courtesy Point of No Return, <http://jewishrefugees.blogspot.com>.*

BY MEL WACKS AND  
ANDREW PERALA

**T**he current era is one of profound change for many countries in the Middle East, including civil-war wracked Libya.

But decades ago, thousands were forced to flee Libya and lives were forever altered by distant events that, back then, seemed far away. Today, there are

no known survivors of a once-thriving Jewish community in a country they helped build - a country that fell apart in the spring of 2011.

Ruined husks of buildings, fading photographs and the work of a few to record and share memories are all that remain of a presence with roots extending back

*Continued*

# Some Ancient Highlights from our May 30-June 1, 2011 Pre Long Beach Auction



Augustus 27 BC.-14 AD.  
Gold Aureus RIC-192a  
EF



Claudius and Agrippina Jr.  
50-54 AD.  
Gold Aureus RIC-80 EF



Domitian 81-96 AD.  
Gold Aureus EF



Domitian 81-96 AD.  
Gold Aureus  
Choice VF



Domitian 81-96 AD.  
Gold Aureus RIC-769  
Ch. VF



Carinus 283-285 AD  
Gold Aureus RIC-235  
Mint State



Diocletian  
284-305 AD  
Gold Aureus RIC-300  
Nearly Mint State



Maximianus Daza  
305-306 AD.  
Gold Aureus RIC 96c  
Nearly Mint State



Constantine II  
337-340 AD.  
Gold Solidius  
Nearly Mint State



Julian II  
361-363 AD.  
Gold Solidius RIC-199 EF



Aelia Flaccilla  
379-395 AD.  
Gold Solidius RIC-78 Choice VF



Licinia Eudoxia 425-455 AD  
Gold Solidus C-1  
Nearly Mint State

This sale will also feature important Judean, World and U.S. Coins. Online bidding and catalogues available after May 1, 2011. Call 310-551-2646 to order \$15 US | \$40 Int or view it free online: [www.goldbergcoins.com](http://www.goldbergcoins.com)

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# TALMUD SCHOOLS, DAILY LIFE VIBRANT



*Photographs courtesy  
Armando Nahum*

*Top, a photo of bakers and bread sellers on a Tripoli street, circa pre-World War II.*

*At left, a contemporary photo of the interior of a Tripoli synagogue.*

*Continued*

centuries. Hope remains, perhaps not of returning, but of keeping alive the connection to a homeland that is no longer home. There are occasional conventions of the displaced. And for numismatic collectors, at least one rare medal has surfaced from a former Talmud School in Tripoli.

Alex Ben-Ariel describes this medal on his website [www.historama.com](http://www.historama.com), as issued in 1933-4 by the Talmud Torah School ("Beit Sefer Talmud Torah") in Tripoli. The medal apparently was awarded for scholastic achievement. Historical details are scarce aside from the legends and devices on the medal.

The obverse of this silver, seven-gram,

27-millimeter diameter prize medal features a legend in Hebrew: "Ben Hacham Yismach Av" ("A Smart Son Makes a Father Happy") surrounding a tablet of the Ten Commandments - with "Mishlei yud-alef" ("Book of Proverbs 12") in Rashi script below.

The Sefer (book) Mishlei is also known as one of the Books of Wisdom of the Bible, which encourages the reader to lead a life of intellect. The reverse reads in Hebrew "Prize 5694" (1933-1934) and "Beit Sefer Talmud Torah Tripoli."

The former Jewish community of Libya can trace its origin back to Roman rule some 300 years before the Common Era.

More than two millennia ago, the social

*Continued*

# RARE MEDAL HONORS SCHOLARS

*Continued*

climate was such that Jews prospered in the region. Then, in 73 C.E., a zealot arrived from the land of Israel, Jonathan the Weaver, and incited a revolt among the poor in Cyrene.

The relatively “hands-off” practice of Roman rule toward Jews catalyzed immediately. Romans murdered Jonathan the Weaver and executed his followers and wealthy Jews in Cyrene.

The revolt, historians note, foreshadowed another revolt more than four decades later (115 CE) in Cyrene, Egypt and Cyprus.

Seen in the hindsight of 20th century history, Jonathan the Weaver’s fight, and crushing defeat, foreshadowed a crisis precipitated in Libya in 1967 by the Six Day War.

The population of Jews in Libya had steadily decreased after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. But the Six Day War marked the final last days, and from the opening day of the war, until the early 1970s, the population of Jews in Libya decreased until none were left.

According to author Renzo DeFelice’s book *Jews in an Arab Land: Libya, 1835-1970*, (translated by Judith Roumani, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985),

*Continued*



*Images courtesy Alex Ben-Ariel*  
*A rare medal issued 1933-34 by the Talmud Torah School in Tripoli, Libya. The obverse, top, depicts the stone tablet of the Ten Commandments surrounded by a legend that translates as “A Smart Son Makes a Father Happy.” The medal’s reverse gives the date - 5694 - and school name, the “Beit Sefer Talmud Torah Tripoli.” The 27-millimeter silver medal weighs seven grams.*

# COMMUNITIES VANISHED OVERNIGHT

## SCENES OF DAILY LIFE IN LIBYA LOST DECADES AGO



*Photographs courtesy Armando Nahum  
The Nahum family on a Tripoli street, circa 1950s; and at left, an older, undated photo of a Libya Jewish wedding party.*

*Continued*

there were 8,509 Jews in the city of Tripoli in 1911. The population prospered, growing to 15,627 in 1931 and reaching 17,196 individuals by 1936.

For many Jews living in Libya between the world wars, conditions were not unbearable. The World Jewish Congress reports the “situation remained good and the Jews made great strides in education,” including the operation of Talmud schools in Tripoli.

But that relatively benign situation changed by the late 1930s, with the gradual enforcement of Fascist anti-Jewish laws. From then until the departure of the last Jews some three decades ago, Jews were subject to increasing repression.

Still, by 1941, according to the World Jewish Congress, Jews accounted for a quarter of the population of Tripoli and maintained 44 synagogues.

With the advent of World War II, Jews found no escape in Libya from Nazi atrocities. By 1942, Germans occupied the Jewish quarter of Benghazi, plundering shops, and deporting more than 2,000 Jews across the desert, where an estimated 400 died.

Many Jews from Tripoli were also sent to forced labor camps. During the British occupation, there was a series of pogroms, the worst of which, in 1945, resulted in the deaths of more than 100 Jews in Tripoli and other towns and the destruction of five synagogues.

With insecurity growing, and the establishment of the State of Israel, many Jews fled Libya even though emigration was illegal. Still, more than 3,000 Jews succeeded in leaving, with many resettling in Israel.

When the British legalized emigra-

# LIVES ALTERED INSTANTLY BY WORLD EVENTS

Images courtesy  
Armando Nahum

*The gutted remnant of a Tripoli synagogue, exact date unknown. Below, the Nahum family at breakfast in the family home in Tripoli before a distant war changed everything.*



*Continued*

tion in 1949, 30,000 Jews left Libya.

By the time of Col. Muammar Qaddafi's coup in 1969, only about 500 Jews remained in Libya. Qaddafi would subsequently confiscate all Jewish property and cancel all debts owed to Jews.

By 1974 there were no more than 20 Jews in the entire country. It is now believed that in Libya, the Jewish presence has ceased to exist.

Those are the official statistics compiled by a variety of sources.

But statistics can overwhelm, and numb understanding. Numbers alone cannot tell individual stories. The personal stories of forced exodus from Libya

hotknife through the cold numbers.

Vivienne Roumani-Denn, whose family emigrated to Boston from Libya when she was 12 years old, has documented the uprooting of Jews from Libya in her critically acclaimed film, *The Last Jews of Libya*, (narrated by Isabella Rossalini and available as a DVD and/or book at [lastjewsoflibya.com](http://lastjewsoflibya.com)).

Armando Nahum is an ex-Libyan Jew. His father, Quint, was born in Libya, the son of multiple generations of Libyan Jews. Nahum's mother, Angela, also was born in Libya, after her Italian Catholic parents had emigrated to Libya in search of a better life. Nahum's website, <http://>

*Continued*

# TRANSFORMATION: OASIS TO DESERT

*Continued*

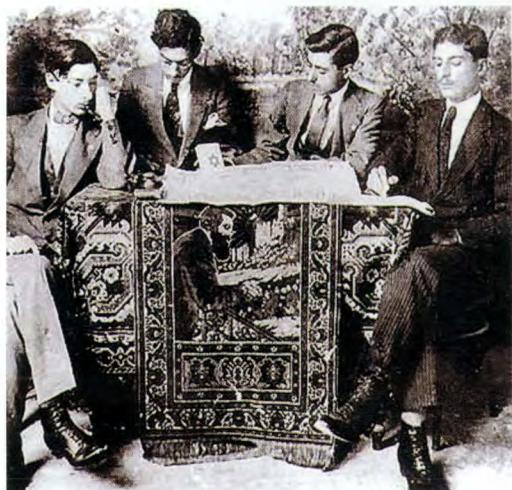
[web.mac.com/anahum/iWeb/](http://web.mac.com/anahum/iWeb/), features several “windows” into the daily life of a young boy in Libya mercifully oblivious to the dangers all around. “It was fun times,” he writes, of trips to the beach and playing safely outdoors with friends.

That sunny childhood ended when world events bowled through Libya on June 5, 1967. Nahum describes his family’s hurried, secretive flight from the land of their birth, bringing only what they could carry.

The precipitating event for the last stronghold of Jews in Libya was the outbreak of 1967’s Six Day War. The brilliantly executed preemptive strike on Israel’s neighbors decapitated lethal intentions by surrounding nations, but inflamed Arabs in Libya.

When the news broke in Tripoli on June 5, 1967 of the airstrikes against Egyptian forces, agitated crowds became within hours lethal riots targeted against Jews.

“Mom was at her store, ‘Pixie Tailoring’ and Dad was at his: ‘Rones Liquor Store.’ Immediately upon the news, Dad closed the store, went to pick up Mom and went home ... My brother and I were having fun at the ‘Underwater Club’ swimming, laughing and just being with friends... Mom and Dad came looking for us, found us and took us back home ... Mom and Dad had a look I have never seen upon their faces, a panic but controlled look.” The family’s flight took several days, and was aided by a sympathetic



*Photograph courtesy Vivienne Roumani-Denn  
A 1915 meeting of the first Jewish National Fund Committee in Tripoli.*

member of the Royal family.

Before finding safe passage out, Nahum writes “We remained at our house for one week. We somehow managed for food and I recall Mom and Dad talk about finding a bag of fresh bread at our door steps. We do not know to this day who might have risked their life for us.” □

Additional resources include:

**JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa**, <http://www.jimena.org/index.htm>;

**The Last Jews of Libya**, a film by Vivienne Roumani-Denn, <http://geoimages.berkeley.edu/libyajew/LibyanJews/libya.html>;

**The Forgotten Jews; A Personal Story** by Armando Nahum; <http://web.mac.com/anahum/iWeb>;

**Justice for Jews from Arab Countries**; <http://www.justiceforjews.com/>.

**The Jews of Libya: Coexistence, Persecution, Resettlement**, by Maurice Roumani.



*Image courtesy  
Goldberg's Coins*

*The reverse of  
a 1637 2 ducat  
“Death Ducat”  
struck to commemo-  
rate the end of  
the rule of Wilhelm  
IV in the German  
state of Hesse. The  
four letters of the  
unspeakable name  
of God, the Tetra-  
grammaton, grace  
the sun stilling  
the winds blowing  
against a tree.*

# Presenting the Unspeakable:

*THE TETRAGRAMMATON ON 16TH AND 17TH  
CENTURY NORTHERN EUROPEAN COINS*

**By Howard Berlin**

**B**oth Denmark and Sweden long have had warm relations with their Jewish communities, especially evident in the cooperation between both nations during World War II in smuggling 7,200 Danish Jews to Sweden.

Few other than avid numismatists are likely aware that some of the early Danish and Swedish coins contain the Tetragrammaton, which is the Hebrew four-letter name of God.

*Continued*

# HEBREW ALSO ON GERMAN COINS



*Image courtesy Goldberg's Coins*  
The German state of Hesse in the 17th century had a tradition of striking "death" coins in 1- and 2-ducat denominations to commemorate the passing of a ruler. The mintages, according to Goldberg's Coins, were all "exceedingly small, and all are very rare." Shown here, the obverse of the "death ducat" shown on the previous page. This commemorative gold coin sold for \$10,925 at a Goldberg's auction in May 2008.

*Continued*

Having long been interested in different aspects of Jewish numismatics, I was aware of these coins and I finally had the opportunity to view many examples bearing the Tetragrammaton. On a recent trip to Europe, I visited both the Copenhagen's Nationalmuseet, home to the Royal Collection of Coins and Medals and Stockholm's National Museum, which houses the Royal Coin Cabinet.

## TETRAGRAMMATON

The Greek word "tetragrammaton" means "four letters" and represents the four Hebrew letters yod-hey-vuv-hey יְהֻוָּה as read from right to left.

This four-letter combination appears exactly 5,410 times in the Tanakh, or Old Testament, which

makes up the five books of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings.

Because ancient Hebrew was written without nikudot (vowel marks) we are not really sure how these ancient words were pronounced. Only the priests of the ancient temples knew God's correct name and pronunciation and they whispered it only on Yom Kippur within the temple's Holy of Holies in the presence of God.

Modern Hebrew does not use vowel marks and its use today is generally confined to prayer books and aids for teaching Hebrew. Because, as in ancient times, Jews today never pronounce the four letters of the Tetragrammaton exactly, even when writing with vowel marks, the word "adonai," meaning

*Continued*

# DANISH JEW HEADED MINT

*Continued*

“Lord,” is said in its place.

When Christian scribes translated the Torah from the Hebrew Masoretic text during the Middle Ages, they incorrectly translated the Tetragrammaton with the vowel marks as either “Jehovah,” not knowing about the prohibition of the pronunciation of these four letters, or as “Yahweh,” from its approximate four-letter English transliteration, YHWH.

Very often coin auction catalogers include in their description for these Danish and Swedish coins having the Tetragrammaton the specific mention of Jehovah or Yahweh, further propagating this error.

On June 29, 2008, the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments ruled that the name of either Yahweh or Jehovah “must not be used or pronounced in songs and prayers during the Catholic Masses.” This ruling now nearly coincides with the traditional Jewish practice.

## DENMARK’S JEWS

The most famous of Denmark’s early kings was Christian IV, who reigned from 1603 until 1648. He had a Mint Master named Albert Dionis, a Sephardic Jew – one who



*Image courtesy Goldberg's Coins*

*A 1645 Denmark 2-mark silver coin displays the Tetragrammaton prominently on its reverse.*

---

is a descendant from Spain and Portugal following the 1492 Edict of Expulsion, the Alhambra Decree.

The king wanted Dionis, who was living in Hamburg with a successful import-export business at the time, to head the mint in Gluckstadt, a town newly created in 1617 on the Elbe River. Dionis accepted the king’s offer and was appointed Mint master in 1619.

On Nov. 22, 1622, and perhaps at the suggestion of Dionis, the king invited Sephardic Jews “of the Portuguese Nation,” as they were known, from Amsterdam and Hamburg to come to Denmark.

So that Gluckstadt could compete economically with Hamburg, the Danish king promised Jews

*Continued*

# SYMBOL PROMINENT ON MANY COINS

*Continued*

complete religious freedom, and allowed them to own property and practice their professions. Although this invitation was first restricted only to Sephardic Jews, in the 1680s, the Ashkenazi Jews – those from the Rhineland and Eastern Europe – were also permitted entry into Denmark.

The Danish monetary system from the 16th to the early 19th century consisted of the penning, skilling, mark and ducat. Twelve penning equaled 1 skilling, 1 mark equaled 16 skilling and 12 mark equaled 1 ducat.

The first Danish coins bearing the Tetragrammaton were minted in 1644. These coins were 4 skilling, 1 mark, 20 skilling and 2 mark, all of which were composed of 0.593 fine silver, except the 4-skilling coin, which was made 0.250 fine silver. In addition, half-, 1- and 2-ducat coins (all composed of 0.979 fine gold) also were minted with the 1644 date. The quarter-ducat coins (also 0.979 fine gold) only the bear the 1649 date and were minted in Copenhagen.

However, not all coins were minted in Copenhagen. All 1-mark coins, 1644 through 1647 inclusive, were minted in Christiania (since renamed Oslo) while 1-ducat coins with the 1644, 1645 and 1646 dates were struck at Gluckstadt (now in Germany), home of Denmark's' first Sep-



*Images courtesy Goldberg's Coins*  
Top: The reverse of a 1630 SchieBtaler Klippe from the German state Hesse Cassel portrays a tree in a storm, with the sun above and the Hebrew Tetragrammaton legend often transliterated as "Jehovah" both above a city of six houses. On the obverse, above, the bust, facing right, of Wilhelm V (1627 to 1637) with the date in Latin, M-D-C-XXX and rosettes in the corners. The legend surrounds Wilhem V's portrait: WILHELM.D:G:LANDGRAVT: HASSIAE CO:C:D:ZE:N\*

hardic Jews who were known as Ulfeldter, or "Hebrews." Mint records show that 1-ducat coins with the 1644, 1645 and 1646 dates also were struck at Copenhagen.

*Continued*

# USAGE OF HOLY PHRASE UNCLEAR

*Continued*

It is not clear why Christian IV chose the Tetragrammaton to be a prominent element on the coins during the last four years of his reign. Perhaps it was due in part to the influence of his Jewish Mint master. Another hypothesis allows the legend that the king considered the Hebrew letters to be some sort of talisman or good luck symbol that was instrumental in helping him defeat Sweden in the two-year Kalmar War, which ended in 1613.

After his victory, the king ordered that the Tetragrammaton be carved prominently onto various churches and public buildings constructed during his reign. The inscription is still visible on many of these buildings, such as the Round Tower in Copenhagen's Latin Quarter, built in 1637 originally as an observatory.

The coins of Christian IV having the Tetragrammaton were not minted every year between 1644 and 1648 for each denomination, but at least 26 known combinations of dates, denominations, Mints and die varieties are known.

The central design for the obverse for the silver coins is dominated by the king's crowned monogram – the number 4 enclosed by the letter C. For the



*Images courtesy Goldberg's Coins*

*Sweden's 1609 6-mark coin carries the four letter word in Hebrew for God, the Tetragrammaton, above the obverse portrait of Carl IX. Rare. This coin sold for \$6,900 in Goldberg's May 2008 auction.*

gold ducats of all denominations, the obverse shows the king wearing a crown and holding a scepter and orb as his symbols of power.

The reverse for all denomination is the same. In the center of

*Continued*

# FIRST SEEN ON 1568 SWEDISH GOLD



*Images courtesy Howard Berlin/Gabriel Hildebrand, the Royal Coin Cabinet, Stockholm*  
Sweden's first gold coin, the 1568 ungyersk gyllen, carried the Tetragrammaton on the reverse. The obverse portrays the laureate portrait, facing right, of Erik XIV.

*Continued*

the Danish coins is the Tetragrammaton with vowel marks. Above and below it is the Latin IUSTUS IUDEX. When combined with the Tetragrammaton, it translates as "The Lord is a righteous judge."

Coincidentally, this is virtually identical to the equivalent Hebrew phrase "da'han ha'emet" ("God ... who is a righteous [or true] judge"), which are the last words of the "rending of the garment" blessing said by mourners at a Jewish funeral.

## **SWEDEN'S JEWS**

Like Denmark, Sweden also developed a close relationship with the Jews, but at a later period. And like many areas throughout Europe, there were also dark periods in its treatment of Jews.

From 1718 to 1772 dur-

ing what was termed the "Age of Liberty," decrees were issued against Jews, and no Jews were allowed in Sweden.

It was not until 1774 that the first Jew, Aaron Isaac, was allowed into the country. In 1878 the Swedish Parliament granted Swedish Jews full civil rights. Despite the granting of these civil liberties, Swedish law, like the laws of the Netherlands, today prohibit ritual slaughter of animals for food. Thus, halal meat for Muslims and kosher meat for Jews must be imported from Denmark.

The first appearance of the Tetragrammaton on a Swedish coin was in 1568, some 76 years before those of Denmark. It appeared on Sweden's first gold coin, the ungyersk gyllen ("Hungarian gold").

At a gold content of more than 23 karats (24 karats is pure), this

*Continued*

# JAMES II MEDAL CARRIES PHRASE

*Continued*

was to be a version of the Dutch guilder and only 5,032 coins were struck. The obverse has the laureate image of Eric XIV, who ruled from 1560 to 1568. The reverse has the Tetragrammaton with vowel marks, which is the first word in Hebrew from Eric's motto: "Deus dat cui vult" – "God gives to whom He wills." The motto alludes to the fact that Eric was Sweden's first hereditary king and that he received his succession from God and not by election at the Stones of Mora as did the Swedish kings before him.

Besides the coins of Eric XIV, other Swedish coins bearing the Tetragrammaton were struck during the reigns of three other monarchs: Karl IX (Anglicized to Charles) with known dates from 1599 to 1603 as duke, and as king from 1604 to 1611; Gustav II Adolph, perhaps the greatest of all Swedish kings, known as the "Lion of the North," from 1616 to 1626; and John, Duke of Ostergotland, from 1613 to 1626. Like older brother Eric XIV, Karl's Latin royal motto also included a reference to Jehovah: "Jehovah solatum meum" – "In God I Trust."

During this period the Swedish monetary system was composed of the ore, mark (equal to 8 ore), daler (a forerunner of the U.S. dollar and equal to 32 ore) and



*Image courtesy Goldberg's Coins*

*The Tetragrammaton appeared on a British silver commemorative medal struck for James II in 1689. The medal's reverse depicts a column struck and broken by lightning emanating from the cloud bearing, according to Goldberg's Auction catalog 36, "the name of Jehovah in Hebrew. View of London from the south. Rare." This example sold for \$3,105, including fees.*

the riksdaler (equal to 96 ore).

More than 66 known combinations of dates, denominations, Mints die varieties and rulers with the Tetragrammaton are known, including: half and 2 ore; half, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 mark; half and 1 daler; and the riksdaler. While most coins were minted in Stockholm, others were minted at Goteborgh, Vadsten and Soderkoping.

## **GOLD KLIPPEs**

Of the Swedish coins, two of the more unusual are those gold coins that are square in shape, called "klippes," as they were literally clipped from a sheet of

*Continued*

# PHRASE APPEARS ON RAREST COINS



Sweden's rare 1626 gold 10-mark klippe portrays the Tetragrammaton on the coin's reverse as though shining from within the Sun. The coin's obverse depicts royal symbols of King Gustav II Adolph.

Images courtesy Gabriel Hildebrand, the Royal Coin Cabinet, Stockholm/Howard Berlin.

*Continued*

gold to save time. Two that have the Tetragrammaton (both in 0.870 fine gold) are the rare 1612 5-mark piece of Karl IX and the 1626 10-mark coin of Gustav II Adolph.

Collecting these coins can prove quite a challenge. Many of the silver coins are readily available in low grades while the gold coins are often harder, if not more expensive, to acquire in most grades. However, some of the klippes are exceedingly rare and are usually found only in museum collections such as the national ones in Copenhagen and Stockholm.

## OTHER OCCURRENCES

Although I have focused only on the early coins of Denmark and

Sweden, further hunting reveals that the Tetragrammaton also appears on 17th century medallic double show talers of Holland.

In addition, German cities and states such as Erfurt, Nuremberg, Hesse-Cassel and Saxony during the 17th century also struck ducats and talers bearing the Tetragrammaton. □

*A version of this article first ran in Coin World, Jan. 3, 2011. Used with permission of Coin World and the author.*

*Recommended for further reading: "Use of God's Name Jehovah on Coins, Medals, Tokens and Jetons" by longtime AINA member Saul Needleman, Ph.D., Xlibris Corporation, 1-888-795-4274.*

# Nerva's



## Bold Move?

BY AARON KOGON

One year after Nerva became the Emperor of Rome, he minted a very enigmatic coin, commemorating the abolition of not the actual tax, but the demeaning embarrassment of the method of collecting the “Jewish Tax.”

Marcus Cocceius Nerva (more commonly known as “Nerva”) became the

Roman emperor in the year 96 of the Common Era, following the assassination of the previous emperor, Domitian.

Although Domitian (81 to 96 CE) was considered a ruthless tyrant, he gave himself many honors, making himself popular with the citizens - but he was hated and

*Continued*

# INDECENT PROOF OF TAX ENDED?



*Image courtesy  
Goldberg's Coins*

*On the preceding page,  
the obverse of a sestertius  
portrays the aged emperor.  
The coin's reverse, at left,  
seems to proclaim the end,  
if not of the Temple tax,  
of acts of "calumny" in  
collecting the tax. At left,  
the reverse of the same  
coin with the central date-  
palm tree flanked by S C  
(SENATUS CONSULTO) and  
the surrounding legend FISCI  
IVDAICI CALVMNIA.*

*Continued*

feared by Rome's Senators. In the early years of his rise to power, Domitian was a Roman general and proved himself during the First Jewish Revolt against Rome. As a result of that war, Domitian taxed the Jews heavily during his reign.

Domitian was later assassinated by court officials, and replaced by Nerva, who was aware of and may have even participated in the assassination plot.

At age 66, Nerva was already old when he decided to end Domitian's tyranny by promising never to kill any of his Senators. Historians often call Nerva a weak but benevolent ruler, who only ruled from 96 to 97 CE while leading the nation to the brink of a civil war.

Nerva minted coins as messages of propaganda against Domitian's tyrannical

ways. Domitian had minted coins bearing the legend SALVS AVGVST[I] or WELFARE OF THE EMPEROR with some coins showing altars.

Nerva later minted coins bearing the similar but contrasting legend SALVS PVBLICA, meaning WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE.

Nerva also minted coins proclaiming JUSTICE OF THE EMPEROR, and issued coins wishing luck to both the emperor and the people on the same coin.

Nerva also minted a very interesting sestertius (*Hendin 797, RIC 82*). The obverse is similar to coins of that period, and appears normal for a coin of Nerva.

On the obverse, there is a laureate bust of Nerva right, reading IMP NERVA CAES AVG P M TR P COS II PP, which fully spelled

*Continued*

# ABOLISHING CALUMNY SINGULAR ACT

*Continued*

out stands for IMPERATOR NERVA, CAESAR, AUGUSTUS, PONTIFEX, MAXIMUS, TRIBUNICIA POTESTAS, CONSUL ROMA II, PATER PATRIAE.

The reverse of this coin is what makes it so curious. There is a palm tree in the center of the coin, with dates hanging from either side of tree. Around the coin is the fascinating legend reading FISCI IVDAICI CALVMNIA SVBLATA with S.C.

There has been no consensus about the exact translation of this coin (with the exception of the standard SC at the end of the legend, which stands for SENATUS CONSULTO), but we can translate it as “the calumny of the Jewish Tax has been abolished, consulted by the Senate.”

During the time when the Temples (and the Tabernacle) existed, Jews had to pay a half shekel (Heb. *מחצית השקל*), equal to two drachmae, as a tax once a year, to help fund the care and use of the holy items (*Exodus 30:11-16*).

After the destruction of the Second Temple, Vespasian continued to tax the Jews, and sent the money to the care of the worship of Jupiter Capitolinus, distorting the religious and historical context of the Temple tax to humiliate the Jews.

Domitian later heavily taxed all of the Jews, wherever they lived, even if they concealed their Jewish heritage and religion. In other acts of calculated humiliation, the Romans publicly checked



*Image courtesy Goldberg's Coins*  
Early in Nerva's reign (96 to 98 CE), the Rome mint struck gold aurei depicting clasped hands on the reverse surrounded by the legend CONCORDIA EXERCITUUM, a direct appeal for military loyalty.

men, often in crowded places, to see if the person was circumcised and therefore Jewish.

One good example of the Roman distortion of the Jewish tax was recorded by the Roman historian Suetonius. He wrote that a 90-year-old man had been publicly stripped and examined to see if he was Jewish, even though the Jewish law writes only people from age 20 to 62 were taxed.

Most historians nowadays think that this coin was not actually commemorating the abolishing of the tax itself, but rather, it was the calumny (CALVMNIA) of the Jewish tax that was abolished (or gotten rid of) (SVBLATA).

This means that the Jews were still taxed, but the embarrassing public in-

*Continued*

# DID 'MIRACLE AT SEA' AFFECT NERVA?



*Image courtesy Goldberg's Coins  
The obverse of a gold aurei struck early in  
Nerva's reign portray's the emperor laureate and  
perhaps somewhat younger than his actual age.*

*Continued*

spection was eliminated.

Nerva was characterized during his rule as a weak emperor.

But this view may be not exactly correct, especially in comparison to the terror-filled reigns of the previous Flavian emperors. Nerva apparently attempted to abolish the humiliating acts of proof that had developed while collecting a tax that had been in existence for 26 years.

This decree alone would have been a bold thing to do. Of all the things Nerva could have done to appease the people of Rome after a tyrannical reign, why did he prioritize the Jewish tax?

There are several references in the Talmud about the trip of several rabbis to Rome after the death of Domitian, to meet Nerva (*Mishnah, Shabbath 16.8, Maaser Sheni 5.9, Erubin 4.2; Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 23a.41b; Jerusalem Talmud, Sukkah 2.4,52d*).

According to Jewish tradition, Rabbi Akiva had saved Nerva's life by warning

him about Domitian's plans to kill him.

Domitian was killed by Stephanus, a servant of Consul Flavius Clemens. Clemens, according to the Talmud, was greatly affected by the sages of Judaea, especially Rabbi Akiva.

Clemens' first encounter of the Rabbis occurred when Akiva, Nachum of Gimzo and several other Rabbis were traveling to Rome to give a gift to the Emperor.

The seas were very rough, and everyone on board thought they were doomed. When the Rabbis came on deck and began praying, the sea calmed.

After several other miraculous events, Clemens converted, gave himself a Hebrew name (Ketiah bar Shalom) before he was sentenced to death for his "atheist" Jewish views.

This may be one of the reasons, along with Nerva's kind ways, that Nerva may have issued a coin bearing the legend apparently revoking the "calumny" of the Jewish tax. ☩

# 1,000 YEARS IN CHINA

BY MEL WACKS

*A medal designed by Jamie Franki honors the 1,000-year history of Jews living in China. The medal's reverse, shown here, features a Jewish worshiper reading the Torah (Bible) and was inspired by a 1722 visit by Catholic priest. The Jewish-American Hall of Fame and the Jewish Times Asia recently issued the 3-inch medal in editions limited to 388 bronze, 188 silver-plated bronze and 88 gold-plated bronze — each serial numbered on the edge. (For more information on obtaining a medal, please see additional information at end of story.)*

**J**ews have lived in peace with their neighbors and with the approval of the government in China from the Silk Road trade route preceding the Middle Ages to the time of refugees in Shanghai during World War II.

A commemorative medal issued by cosponsors The Jewish-American Hall of Fame and the Jewish Times Asia is an impressive three-inch, half pound work of art to honor this long history.



The medal, in limited editions of just 388 bronze, 188 silver-plated bronze and 88 gold-plated bronze — has its own unique serial number inscribed on the edge.

## The Long Road

According to scholar Xin Xu ("The Jews of Kaifeng, China"), the first Jews settled in Kaifeng sometime between 960 and 1126, CE. Kaifeng is one of the seven capitals of ancient China and is

*Continued*

# HISTORY CAPTURED ON MEDAL



*The 2011 medal's obverse combines the Chinese yin-yang symbol (representing the two complementary forces that make up all aspects of life—heaven and earth, male and female, light and dark) with the Jewish Star of David.*

*The Star of David on the medal advances the story of the Jews in China to modern times, when nearly 20,000 European Jews found a safe haven in Shanghai during World War II.*

*Continued*

situated on the bank of the Yellow River about halfway between Beijing and Shanghai. Sources indicate that around the year 1000, Kaifeng had a population estimated at 400,000 and was one of the largest cities in the world.

Kaifeng's - and China's - first synagogue was built in 1163. The first settlers were Silk Road traders, probably from Persia.

It is estimated that by the late 13th century there were about 2,000 Jews in Kaifeng.

A Kaifeng tourist web site states:

"Today the community is fairly well integrated into the local population, after centuries of intermarriage, so that although more than two hundred of the Kaifeng population claim Jewish descent, they will not be overly easy to recognize. Thankfully the beliefs and customs of the Jewish community here,



THE CHINESE JEW  
LI KUANG-T'EN  
HERO OF THE DEFENCE OF PIEN  
1642

*A Drawing from the "Diary of the Defence of Pien"  
ed. of 1852*

that had died out after many centuries of neglect and suppression, is slowly making a comeback."

The web site goes on to indicate that a

*Continued*

# KAIFENG STELES SURVIVED CENTURIES

*Continued*

few steles from the synagogue dedications of 1489, 1512, and 1679 can be seen at the Kaifeng Bowuguan Museum.

The 2011 medal's obverse combines the Chinese yin-yang symbol (representing the two complementary forces that make up all aspects of life—heaven and earth, male and female, light and dark) with the Jewish Star of David.

The Star of David on the medal's reverse advances the story of the Jews in China to modern times, when nearly 20,000 European Jews found a safe haven in Shanghai during World War II.

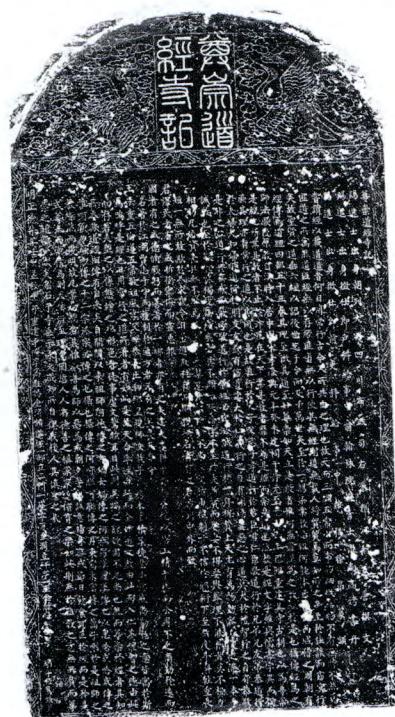
The Hebrew letters within the star spell Shemesh (sun) as appeared on a plaque from the Kaifeng Synagogue, above the Shema prayer.

Interestingly, the morning benedictions before the Shema echo the meaning of the yin-yang: "Who forms light and creates darkness."

The model of the Kaifeng Synagogue, shown in this article, is based on the model displayed at Bet Hatefutsoth Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, Tel Aviv, which in turn was created from the drawings of Catholic Father Jean Domene, made when he visited Kaifeng in 1722. Another image of the Kaifeng Synagogue, also is based on the drawings of Domene.

Significantly, another of Domene's original drawings depict Kaifeng Synagogue worshippers without shoes, as does the medal.

**M**oses, arriving at the site of the burning bush, was immediately

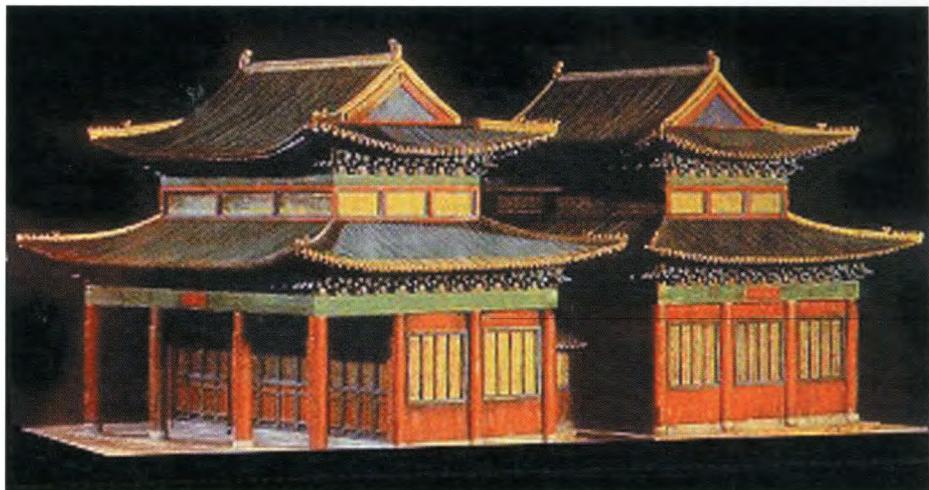


*Above: Ink rubbings of a 1512 stele from the Kaifeng Synagogue.*

*Below: Note the lack of shoes on worshippers in a 1722 drawing by Catholic Father Jean Domene.*



# KAIFENG SYNAGOGUE BLENDED CULTURES



*An exterior view of the Kaifeng Synagogue, copied by Father J. Brucker, from drawings prepared by Father Jean Domenge. Reproduced from "Inscriptions Juives" by Father Jerome Tobar.*

*Continued*

commanded to remove his shoes from his feet, because he was standing on holy ground (*Exodus 3:5*), and from this episode the Sages deduced that one is required to remove shoes in holy places.

The initials of sculptor Jamie Franki, the medal's creator, are below the Chinese inscription. Franki is a prolific designer of

commemorative medals, and his facing portrait of Thomas Jefferson appears on every United States 5-cent coin produced since 2006.

The "Over 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in China" medals are available, as supplies last, from the non-profit Jewish-American Hall of Fame, 5189 Jeffdale Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91364; telephone 818-225-1348. □

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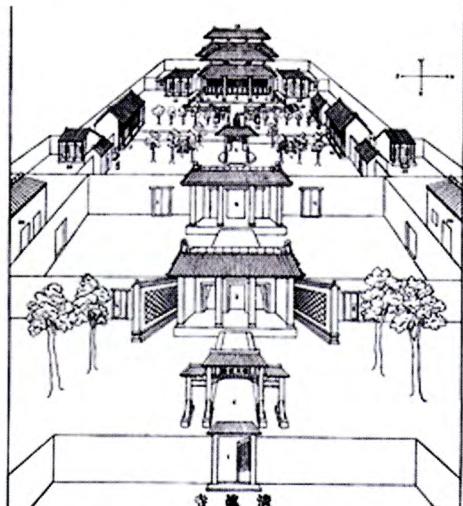
Indicate that you are an AINA member and send your check to the non-profit Jewish-American Hall of Fame, 5189 Jeffdale Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91364. For credit card orders call (818) 225-1348.

# 1826 VIEW: CHINESE JEWS ESTEEMED

An article in Baltimore's *Niles Weekly Register*, published Nov. 18, 1826 indicates that:

"In the last No. of the Asiatic Journal, there is an interesting article respecting the Jews in China. They were settled in that country, as well as in other parts of Asia, many centuries prior to the Christian era; even as early as 1000 years before. They migrated from Persia, by way of Khorason [an historical region spanning what are now northeastern Iran, northern Afghanistan, and the southern parts of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan]. They say themselves that they came from the west, or from Siyu — They have a MS. Copy of the Pentateuch; and they long kept up an intercourse with other Jews in Persia, and the more western parts of Asia: It is said they received some additions soon after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, in 70. Some of them have become Mahometans [Muslims].

"In their more ancient writings, they say Adam was the first man — that Abraham was the real author of the law, which was afterwards published by Moses. They inculcate adoration of heaven; by which is probably meant the Invisible One who inhabits the heavens and all worlds. Abraham, they say, worshipped heaven but not under any figure or image.



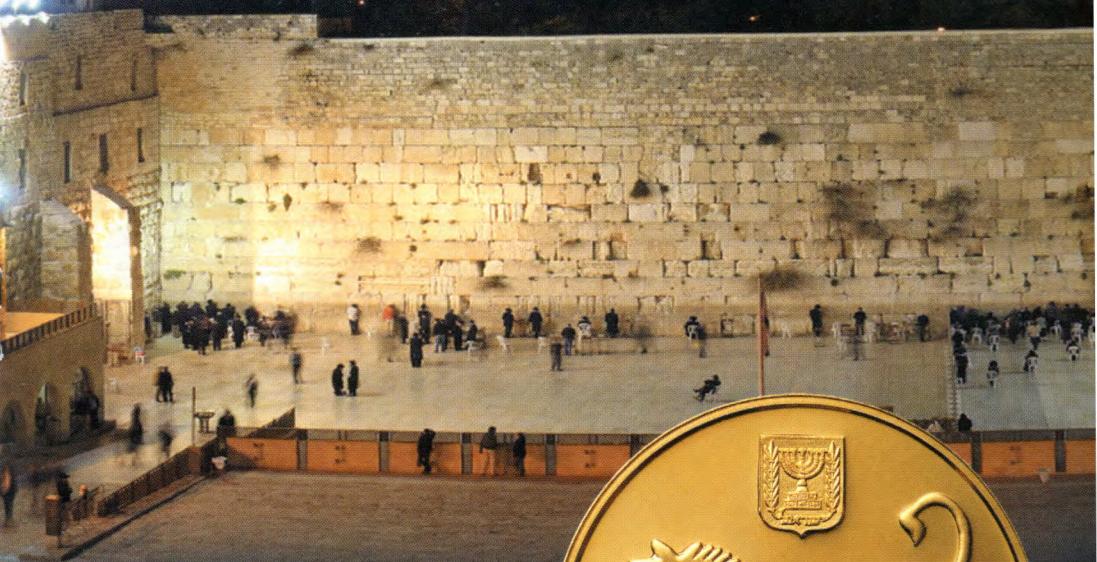
A 1722 drawing of the Kaifeng Synagogue.

"These Jews are said to be honest and industrious, and are esteemed by the Chinese. They have a synagogue 350 feet long and 150 wide, and dedicated to 'the Creator and Preserver of all things.' There is this inscription also on a table in the synagogue, — 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God, is the only Jehovah.'

"When the people enter the temple, they take off their shoes, and when they pray they turn towards the west [Jerusalem]. The person who reads the law covers his face with a thin veil.

"They believe in a judgement, in a paradise, and place of punishment. The sabbath is kept strictly by them. But they do not attempt to make proselytes, nor even go into the temple where an idol is worshipped." ☐

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# SHANGHAI'S MAGNIFICENT MEDAL

ISSUED BY MUSEUM THAT HONORS  
SHANGHAI'S JEWISH REFUGEES OF WWII

BY MEL WACKS

**A** handsome medal has been issued by the Museum for Jewish Refugees in Shanghai. An example of the medal was presented recently to Mel Wacks by Long Hu, a medalist, architect and medal collector in Zhuhai, China.

The Certificate of Authenticity accompanying the medal contains the following text:

“The Jewish people have a long history of torture and suffering ... but their annihilation in the Nazi camps turned into the darkest page in the history of Jews and mankind as well.

“The Chinese people are courageous and kind; not fearing the Fascist tyranny and evil power, they stretched out arms to admit a large number of Jewish refugees, and established a deep, trustworthy

and precious friendship.”

The Museum for Jewish Refugees in Shanghai is housed in the former Ohel Moshe Synagogue, located at No. 62, Changyang Road, Hongkou District. Built in 1927 (5688 in the Jewish calendar), it was a meeting place for Jews in Shanghai at that time.

From the end of 1938 to 1945 — after more than 20,000 Jewish refugees settled down in their homes in the ghetto in Hongkou — the synagogue quickly became the center of their activities in order to support and straighten their faith and energy to fight against Fascism.

In the post-war years, Jewish refugees went to various parts of the world, but this synagogue remains unmovable in their hearts.

Today, when they come to visit

*Continued*

# MEDAL MARKS HISTORY AND REFUGE



*Michelangelo's iconic sculpture of Moses is the central figure on an 80mm copper uniface medal issued by Shanghai's Museum for Jewish Refugees.*

*Continued*

Shanghai, they are sure to visit this synagogue with sighs and sorrows, tears and smiles.

For the sake of telling the past bitter memories and educating visitors, with the approval of our respective departments, a new hall will go up on the former site of Ohel Moshe Synagogue.

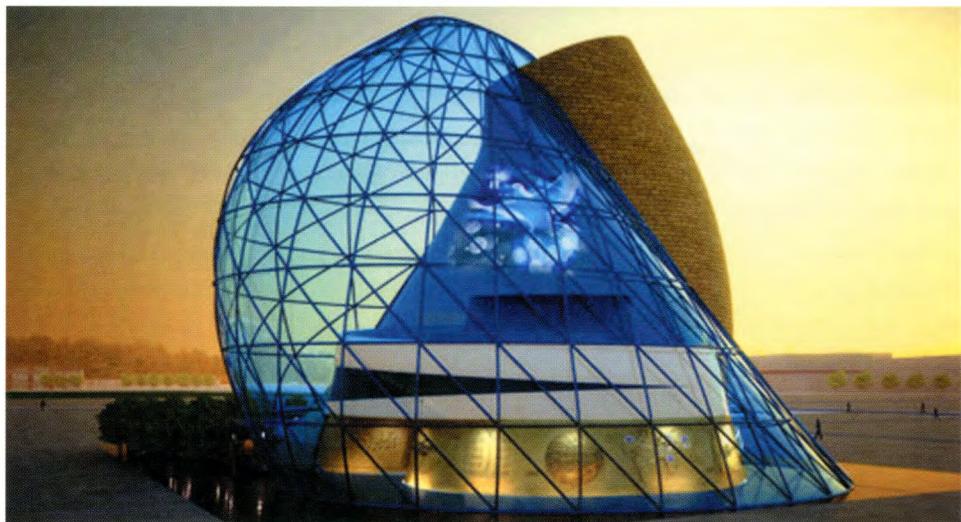
A commemorative copper uniface medallion produced in 1998 is 80 millimeters in diameter, and was issued in an edition of 2,000 pieces. On the lower left of the medal's

uniface design is the main building of the Jewish Refugees Memorial Hall of Shanghai.

The medal's uniface upper part features the Portrait of Moses, the famous masterpiece by the immortal Italian Renaissance artist Michelangelo.

The designer is Mr. Zhu Zhuopeng, a famous collector, writer, calligrapher, art-souvenir-designer, listed in the International Biographical Dictionaries, published separately in England, America and China. □

# Israel's Stunner at Shanghai's Expo 2010



BY MEL WACKS & ANDREW PERALA

Israel's stunning pavilion, shown above in an artist's rendering, was one of the highlights of Expo Shanghai 2010. The global fair ran from May 1 to Oct. 31, 2010 — welcoming 73 million visitors with 246 pavilions built to celebrate the Expo's theme of "Better City, Better Life."

The Israel Pavilion graced the Expo

with a structure composed of two streamlined buildings hugging each other like two clasped hands, or a "seashell."

One side of the "seashell" was made of authentic stone while the other was transparent glass.

The design symbolized Israeli innova-

*Continued*

# COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL ISSUED



*Image courtesy Mel Wacks*

*Silver-plated full-color Proof quality 39 millimeter-diameter medals were sold in the Israel Pavilion during the Expo, and featured the beautiful and innovative "seashell" pavilion structure - designed by Haim Dotan, a pioneering Israeli architect, in collaboration with medal designer Prosper Amir.*

*Continued*

tion and technology as well as representing the dialogue between humanity and nature, the earth and sky, as well as the past and the future.

The design of Israel's Pavilion made several Top 10 lists of Best Pavilion Design, according to news reports.

The pavilion highlighted both innovation and ancient Jewish culture. Specific spaces within the pavilion were organized along the following themes: the Whispering Garden, the Hall of Light and the Hall of Innovations.

The Whispering Garden was an orchard of orange trees that greeted visitors as they entered the building. Inside the natural stone structure was the Hall of Innovations, symbolizing links with the earth and history, and the recycling of natural resources.

Under the transparent glass was the Hall of Light, symbolizing technology, trans-

parency, lightness and the future.

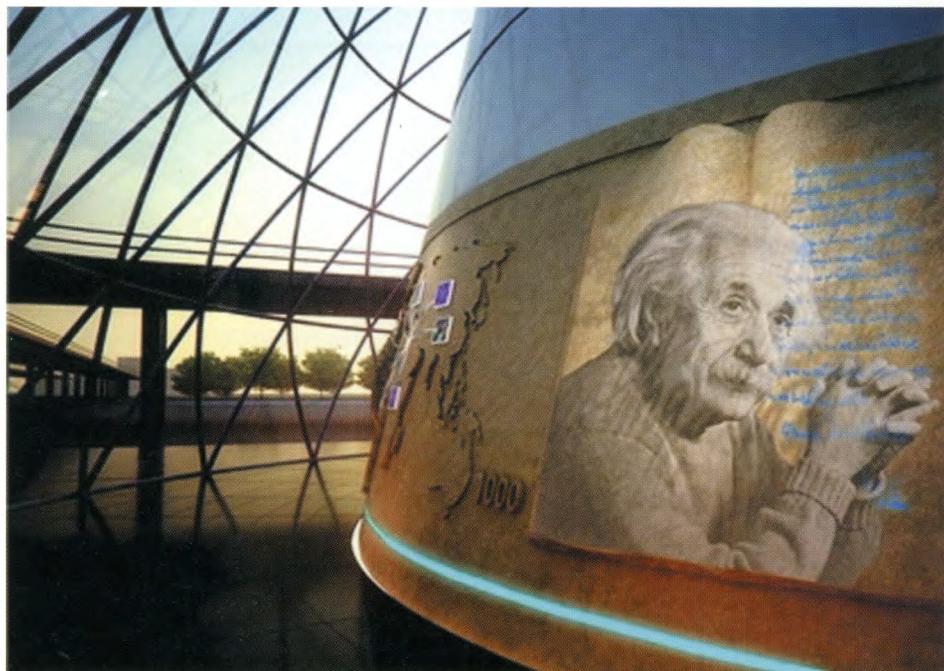
A green orchard came into view as visitors entered the pavilion. About 50 orange trees were planted, and technology made the trees "whisper" in English and Chinese when visitors walked close to them—putting each visitor in direct touch with nature and the irrigation technology that has allowed great regions of agricultural production in Israel and that Israelis take pride in.

The 5.28 square kilometers of land occupied by the Shanghai Expo 2010 flank both sides of the Huangpu River in downtown Shanghai, a city of 14.6 million people.

Israel's pavilion was one of 246 in the Expo, and many, like Israel's, were built in the a futuristic style of architecture - sparked by the extraordinary architecture of the buildings constructed for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games.

*Continued*

# EXTRAORDINARY WORKS ON DISPLAY



*An exhibit with two pages of Albert Einstein's transformational 1915 paper on the General Theory of Relativity, on loan from the Hebrew Museum of Jerusalem, was on display at the Shanghai Expo 2010. At right, the obverse of a 1979 East German 5-mark commemorative coin, one of several issued to honor the centennial of the great scientist's birth.*

*Continued*

The Israel Pavilion was located adjacent to the Pakistan Pavilion and in close proximity to the Pavilions of Oman and Sri Lanka.

For scientists and science buffs, the Hall of Light within the Israel Pavilion had two pages of the original manuscript of Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity on display.

This theory, first published in 1916, expanded upon Einstein's ground-breaking 1905 paper on the Special Theory of

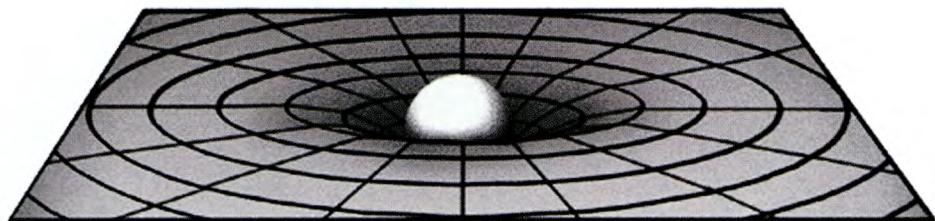


Relativity, and laid out a new view of the cosmos based not on Newton's Laws, but on the four-dimensional concept of spacetime that revolutionized the scientific view of gravity.

“General relativity may be the biggest

*Continued*

# PAVILION REFLECTS GRAVITY'S NEW VIEW



*Albert Einstein, a champion of Israel and one of the greatest scientists of all time, changed forever humanity's perception of space, time and gravity with his 1916 papers on the General Theory of Relativity. Gravity was not controlled by Newtonian forces, rather, gravity was an effect of mass (objects) warping the four-dimensional spacetime continuum. If these words boggle, fear not. Not even Einstein could visualize four dimensions. But we can imagine the two-dimensional surface of a flat plane, like a trampoline, distorted by the presence of a dense sphere, a high-school track team shotput, perhaps, or a bowling ball.*

*Continued*

leap of the scientific imagination in history," wrote Alan Lightman, a physicist and professor of humanities at the Massachusetts of Technology for the PBS television show NOVA in June 2005. "Unlike many previous scientific breakthroughs, such as the principle of natural selection, or the discovery of the physical existence of atoms, general relativity had little foundation upon the theories or experiments of the time.

"No one except Einstein was thinking of gravity as equivalent to acceleration, as a geometrical phenomenon, as a bending of time and space."

To expand on that thought, the concept of General Relativity can be viewed with an analogy elementary school students can comprehend.

In the great tradition of Einstein's "thought experiments" visualize a large but very responsive trampoline. A bowling ball placed in the middle of the tram-

poline's field of flexible fabric creates a depression, just like in the drawing above.

The experimenter, an elementary-grade student perhaps, then rolls a marble at just the right speed toward the bowling ball. When the marble reaches the edge of the bowling ball's depressed "field", the marble's linear course changes. The marble swerves and goes into "orbit" around the bowling ball.

This same effect, but in four-dimensional spacetime, is what makes planets orbit stars, stars orbit the center of galaxies and galaxies orbit the center of mass of galactic clusters.

Einstein's radical recasting of one of the most fundamental concepts of our cosmos changed science forever.

To have pages from Einstein's actual 1915 paper on general relativity on display proved to be a great attraction for many visitors to Israel's Pavilion and highlighted many of Israel's other technical accom-

*Continued*

# EXPO DREW 73 MILLION VISITORS IN 2010

*Continued*

plishments.

"Einstein's theory of relativity has been a great inspiration for Israel innovators," said Yaffa Ben-Ari, deputy commissioner-general of the Israel Pavilion.

The two pages, selected from a total of 46 in the paper, contain Einstein's famous equation  $E=mc^2$  which describes the relationship between energy (E), mass (M) and the speed of light (C).

Einstein's wife Elsa donated the 46-page handwritten manuscript to Hebrew University at its opening in 1925, three years after Einstein was awarded the 1921 Nobel Prize in physics (the award had been withheld in 1921 and was awarded retroactively in 1922). Einstein, of course, helped establish Hebrew University of Jerusalem with Dr. Chaim Weitzmann.

Displaying at the Shanghai Expo 2010 two of the 46 pages of the paper Einstein wrote in longhand at his home in Berlin in 1916 brought full circle a little known coincidence:

On Nov. 13, 1922, Einstein was in Shanghai en route to Japan. That day in Shanghai, the Swedish Consul tracked Einstein down to inform him that he had just won the 1921 Nobel Prize for Physics.

The Israel Pavilion's Hall of Light also featured a 15-meter screen that showed



*Image courtesy Mel Wacks*

*The reverse of a special commemorative medal sold at the Israel Pavilion during the Shanghai 2010 Expo proclaims the Expo's central theme: Better City, Better Life; a fitting them for a world fair hosted by one of the world's largest, and recently, most economically dynamic cities. Shanghai's population: XX million.*

films highlighting the country's innovations and technological achievements.

Considered by Israel's pavilion designers as the centerpiece of the pavilion, the Hall of Innovations offered an audiovisual show that gave visitors the opportunity to hear from Israeli children, scientists, doctors and inventors through digital presentations on hundreds of video screens.

The Hall's light spheres represented innovation as well as technical breakthroughs in agriculture, food, pharmacology, solar and green energy, science, music, literature, high-tech, telecommunication and security.

*Continued*

# EINSTEIN TWICE IN SHANGHAI

*Continued*

Another exhibit popular with visitors featured an "edible" capsule containing a mini-camera for internal medical diagnoses. (After recording data, the camera would be discharged naturally, causing no real pain for the patient.).

Shanghai's Expo 2010 officially closed on the last day of October 2010. But Expo Shanghai 2010 organizers plan to open a permanent museum in the city in 2012. Included in the museum's permanent displays will be a version of the two pages of Einstein's handwritten General Theory of Relativity exhibited at the Israel Pavilion at Expo 2010.

“Hebrew University in Jerusalem, which owns the manuscript, has agreed to donate it to enhance the bond between Israel and China,” said Yaffa Ben-Ari, deputy commissioner-general of the Israel Pavilion. □

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# Harbin's dramatic token

*Image courtesy Alex Ben-Arieh  
Harbin, China's Jewish Musical Dramatic Society issued a hard-to-find 25 millimeter copper token in the early 20th century, perhaps between the two World Wars. The reverse of the token shows a crowned figure, carrying a scepter and lyre, with a Russian legend CZAR [KING] DAVID.*



By ALEX BEN-ARIEH

**J**ews began arriving in the Chinese city of Harbin in 1899, following China's granting of a concession to Russia to build a railway station there. The Jewish com-

munity there developed quickly, particularly due to anti-Semitism in Czarist Russia. Of note, the Jews developed Harbin's cultural life such that by the 1920's the city was known as the "Paris of the Ori-

*Continued*

# ART'S BRIEF FLOURISH IN HARBIN

*Continued*

ent" and the "City of Music."

Sources note that Harbin's Jewish community created a Jewish cultural club known by its abbreviation "Yilmadag" (which is similar sounding to the abbreviations used on this token), which presented lectures in Russian and Yiddish, dramatic performances and musical evenings.

This copper 25.5-millimeter, 7.6-gram. token was likely produced in between 1910 and the sometime in the 1920s and is probably connected to the activities of Joseph Kaspe.

Kaspe was the owner of Harbin's premier and luxurious "Hotel Moderne," which played host to many of the city's musical and dramatic productions.

His son, Simon, was a gifted pianist who was kidnapped by anti-Semitic White-Russian elements in 1933, held for ransom and murdered. Of Harbin's Jewish heritage perhaps the most well known former residents are the parents of Israel's former Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert.

The token's obverse bears a legend in Russian around the edge (partially abbreviated) that translates as JEW[ISH] MUS[ICAL]-DRAMAT[IC] SOCIETY HARBIN, with two Chinese characters in the center, separated by a dot between them.

The reverse features an image of a crowned figure with lyre and a Russian legend CZAR [KING] DAVID - possibly



Harbin, China's Musical and Dramatic Society issued a commemorative token with Russian and Chinese legends on the obverse.

***'The son of the resort  
where the Society's  
performances were  
staged was kidnapped  
and murdered by  
Anti-Semitic White-  
Russians in 1933.'***

the name of the society.

Oddly, the Russian lettering on the reverse is written right-to-left, the way Hebrew would be written. The token has a plain edge and rim. This rarity is valued at about \$800. ☐

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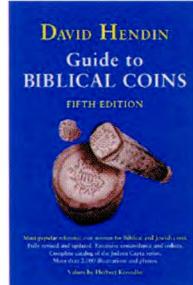
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# Jerusalem in Gold

*ISRAEL JOINS AN  
EXCLUSIVE CLUB  
BY ISSUING ITS  
FIRST GOLD  
BULLION COIN*

BY SHULA KOPF  
*THE JERUSALEM REPORT*

**J**erusalem of Gold is Israel's first one-ounce, 24-carat gold bullion coin launched by the Bank of Israel in May 2010.

The limited-edition coin, the first in a future series, depicts the Tower of David, its sculpted image floating above a mirror-like field. The image is rendered in such detail that one can almost count the bricks of the Old City walls.

The obverse shows the image of the roaring lion of Megiddo with its stylized



*Israel's first gold bullion coin, the 2010 Jerusalem of Gold one-ounce 24-karat gold with the Lion obverse.*

curving tail, replicated from a 2,800-year-old ancient seal.

A bullion coin is valued by its mass and purity rather than by a face value and the price of the Jerusalem of Gold coin fluctuates daily depending on the international price of gold as set at morning in London, plus a 20-percent markup.

As this issue went to press, the price of an ounce of gold was [\$1,534].

In order to be considered legal tender

*Continued*

# COINS DISPLAY IMPORTANT IMAGERY



*The reverse of Israel's first 24-karat gold bullion coin, the Temple of David issued in 2010, features the Temple of David in fine detail. The one-ounce .9999 fine gold coins carry a denomination of 20 New Sheqalim, which is far from the coin's actual value, but is necessary to bear in order to monetize the bullion coins.*

*Continued*

a coin must have a face value. But for bullion coins, this is usually irrelevant; the Jerusalem of Gold was given a face value of 20 New Sheqalim.

Only 3,600 such coins will ever be minted for each issue, making the Jerusalem of Gold series issues relatively rare and giving each a numismatic value beyond the price of the gold content.

Since Israel does not have a minting facility, the Jerusalem of Gold coins are manufactured at the Royal Dutch Mint in Utrecht.

There are four more bullion coins planned in the Jerusalem of Gold series in the upcoming four years.

While Israel does issue other gold coins, they are 22-carat, [rather than pure gold (24-carat) that may investors prefer]."

The launch of the coin was a stroke of great timing. Gold gained almost 30 percent in 2010, reaching a then-record

\$1,431.25 an ounce as investors rushed to purchase bullion as a safe haven for investment and as a hedge against weakening currencies.

The metal's mounting value is linked to its economic role as a stable alternative to paper currencies, and gold's rise speaks volumes about the health of the global monetary system.

Old coins have been used as money since the dawn of history, only to fall out of favor in the early 20th century about the same time that British economist John Maynard Keynes dismissed gold as a "barbaric relic."

Today there are about a dozen countries that continue to have legal tender gold coins, but they are minted primarily for collectors and for investment purposes rather than for shopping at the local mall.

Among Israel's formidable competitors in the gold bullion business are the U.S.

*Continued*

# CULTURAL, ART ICONS PORTRAYED

*Continued*

with its iconic American Eagle, Canada with the Maple Leaf, China with the Panda, Australia with the Gold Nugget and South Africa with the Krugerrand.

“We are only a minor player in the international gold coin market, which is a \$ 160 billion-a-year industry,” says Arthur Boxer, CEO of Israel Coins and Medals Corporation (ICMC).

“But this first bullion coin puts Israel on the map.”

This year, Boxer will travel the world showcasing Israel’s coin collection at trade shows in Berlin, New York, Tokyo, Singapore, Chicago and Beijing.

And even in its reactively limited capacity, ICMC is happy to jump on the gold trend.

It has been advertising the gold coins both locally and internationally. Aimed at gold investors with a soft spot for Israel, the advertising tag line says, “Now more than ever - the gold coins of Israel.”

While the US Mint sold 38 tons worth of American Eagle bullion coins last year, the neophyte Jerusalem of Gold coin sold a mere \$5 million’s worth.

“But it’s a start,” says Boxer with unfaltering enthusiasm.

The phone lines crashed on the propitious date that the ICMC began selling the Jerusalem of Gold coin, says Rivka Toledano, the company’s international sales manager.



*Other limited issue gold coins from Israel are struck on 22-karat planchets like the commemorative honoring Israel’s 60th anniversary, above and are not considered in the strictest sense as bullion.*

The first date of sale was May 12, Jerusalem Day, commemorating the recapture of Jerusalem in the 1967 Six Day War.

“We were overwhelmed by the reception. Distributors in Germany and the US wanted to buy large quantities, probably because it was a first of its kind and has a beautiful design, but we limited the sales to no more than five coins per customer. It wasn’t only Jews who were interested; there was enthusiasm in the general market, particularly in Germany, the US and Poland,” Toledano says.

Lior Lichtman, head of the Issue Unit in the Currency Department of the Bank of Israel, points out that most other countries mint bullion coins in unlimited quantities with a constant, unchanging design. The

*Continued*

# BULLION GOLD LIMITED TO 3,600 PER ISSUE

*Continued*

Bank of Israel, however, will release only the planned 3,600 coins each year - 3,600 being a multiple of 18, symbolic of the Hebrew word *hai*, which means life. The bank's advisory committee, headed by former Supreme Court Justice Yaakov Turkel, will choose a different Jerusalem site each year for the series, while the obverse side, with its roaring lion, will remain constant.

According to Lichtman, their rarity gives the coins a numismatic value beyond their gold content. Investment bullion coins with no numismatic value, such as the American Eagle for example, Donnally sell at a four percent premium. The Franklin Mint in Pennsylvania advertises the "first ever Israeli bullion" for \$2,799, almost \$1,200 more than the Israeli price of \$ 1,626 at the time of publication.

When purchasing the coins, Israelis must pay an additional 16 percent value added tax (VAT). But, in any case, gold is not a popular investment vehicle for the average Israeli investor, says Nir Zonnenberg, head of research for Meitav Investment House.

The whole subject of commodities is less developed in Israel than in the US and Europe," Zonnenberg tells *The Report*.

"The Israeli capital market is still in its infancy and Israelis don't usually invest in commodities such as wheat, soy beans, sugar and so forth. Just about the only commodities they do invest in are oil and gold. Most Israelis who invest in gold do so through Exchange Traded funds (ETF)

such as GLD and gold related mutual funds," he says.

An ETF is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges much like stocks and tracks the price of the underlying asset or index, gold in this case.

Many gold bugs shun ETFs and prefer to own physical gold, despite US tycoon Warren Buffett's famous dismissal of the yellow metal as something that gets dug out of a hole, then melted, and then stashed away in another hole with people paid to guard it.

The Bank of Israel does not seem to be a big fan of gold either. Unlike other central banks around the world, which have begun to increase their gold holdings, Israel holds no gold reserves at all, according to a Bank of Israel spokesman.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) regularly maintains statistics of national assets as reported by various countries and, according to the IMF, Lebanon has 286.8 tons; Egypt, 75 tons and Cyprus almost 14 tons.

The Bank of Israel prefers to keep its gold dealings limited to issuing gold coins and the next bullion coin in the Jerusalem of Gold series will be issued in late spring 2011, set to coincide with Jerusalem Day, which will be celebrated on June I.

This coin will depict the Western Wall, a theme sure to ignite the collecting passions of Jewish coin collectors around the world.

Mel Wacks, president of the American Israel Numismatic Association, which has 800 members, is excited about Israel's first

*Continued*

# ARTS, NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS SHOWN

*Continued*

bullion coin.

“It puts Israel in league with the big players, China, America and Canada and exposes Israel to a bigger audience,” he tells The Jerusalem Report in a telephone interview from Los Angeles.

“The mintage of only 3,600 is minuscule. When the Chinese Panda came out as a bullion coin with a mintage of 25,000, everyone thought it was a small amount, and that’s selling for over \$2,000 a coin. Israel is going to change the design every year and that’s a big plus that will make the coins desirable for collectors.

“If you add in the tiny mintage, in the long run it will increase in value above and beyond the value of the gold. But what thrills me the most is that our coins tell the story of Israel and the Jewish people.”

The ICMC was founded in 1958 by prime minister David Ben Gurion, with a mandate to commemorate the country’s history and culture and to mark national events and milestones.

The very first medal issued that year to celebrate the country’s 10th year anniversary, settled an old score with the Romans. The Roman Emperor issued the infamous Judaea Capta (Judaea in Captivity) coin to celebrate the repression of the Jewish rebellion in 70 CE.



*Among the cultural achievements celebrated on Israel’s 22-karat gold coinage are accolades for writers and the arts, as above.*

On that coin, issued in great quantities as a propaganda tool, the Romans depicted a Jewish captive, hands bound behind his back, and a second captive, a despondent woman seated under a palm tree, weeping for the destruction of her homeland.

Modern Israel’s answer was a medal duplicating the Judaea Capta coin on one side, and on the other side, with the title Israel Liberata, instead of the Jewish captive, a proud farmer planting a tree, and instead of the woman in mourning, a young woman standing up holding her child aloft. The medal was issued in three versions: copper, silver and gold.

The first Israeli gold coin was issued in 1960 to honor Theodore Herzl on the cen-

*Continued*

# ACHIEVEMENT KEY IN DESIGNS

*Continued*

tennial of his birth. It was not considered a bullion coin since it was struck in 22-carat gold rather than 24-carat gold.

“There is no other nation that I know of whose culture, history, symbols and iconography are expressed in their coins to the extent that they are in Israeli coins,” says Yossef Attali, former vice president of the ICMC.

In ancient times, the Jews minted bronze and silver coins rather than gold, which was too expensive.

“It would have been like walking about with a \$1,000 bill in your pocket,” says Wacks, who has written a book called *Handbook of Biblical Numismatics* (available online for free).

During the latter part of the sixth to fourth centuries BCE, when Judaea was part of the Persian empire, small silver coins were struck by an autonomous Jewish authority with the permission of the Persians.

Under the Hasmonean Kingdom, the Jews minted small bronze coins. During the revolt against the Romans, beginning in 66 CE, the Jews made the famous silver shekel and half shekel coins.

They also made silver coins during the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132 to 135 CE taking Roman and Syrian silver coins, filing off the design and restriking them with Jewish motifs, he says.

In the Torah, gold is the most frequently mentioned metal and makes its first appearance in the Bible in Genesis 2:11 in the Garden of Eden.

Moses used gold beaten into plates and sheets for the construction of the Tabernacle, as described in Exodus. In Kings I 10:16, we are told that David set aside 100,000 talents of gold to build the Temple in Jerusalem.

Since a talent is considered to be about

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*‘There is no other nation that I know of whose culture, history, symbols and iconography are expressed in their coins to the extent that they are in Israeli coins.’*

*- Yossef Attali*

---

75 pounds, in today’s prices that would come to about \$1.6 billion. According to Kings I, the weight of gold that Solomon received in one year was 636 talents – or \$9.6 billion in today’s values.

The Bank of Israel can only dream of Solomon’s lost talents of gold.

Besides the new Jerusalem of Gold bullion coin, it makes do with issuing five commemorative coins a year in five different series: Biblical stories, UNESCO world heritage sites in Israel, Independence Day, Israeli Nobel Prize laureates and one ad-hoc series.

The coins are issued in minuscule

*Continued*

# ISRAEL GOLD COINS POPULAR IN CHINA

*Continued*

mintages of only 444 or 555 and contain half an ounce of 22-carat gold. Because of their rarity they are sold at about a 75 percent premium over the value of the gold content.

Boxer estimates that Jewish collectors around the world hold about four billion shekels worth of gold and silver coins that were purchased over the years from the ICMC and are held in safe deposit boxes and desk drawers.

He arrives at that figure by halving the amount purchased over the years, reasoning that at least half the coins have already been sold for their melt value.

The ICMC was a government agency until 2008 when the company was privatized and bought by G.R.A.S. Design Combinations, Ltd., best known as a manufacturer of Israeli-designed sterling silver and gold jewelry with more than 70 retail outlets in the country.

G.R.A.S. beat out 13 competitors and is now the sole distributor of Israeli coins and commemorative medals.

There is general consensus that G.R.A.S. bought new energy and marketing savvy to what was a lackluster government agency.

"I think the people of G.R.A.S. are determined to make it a financial success and they have brought in innovative marketing," says Wacks. "They can't do everything they want to do, since they are limited by the Bank of Israel, which is very conservative in its approach.

"Our organization has a quarterly magazine called *The Shekel* and G.R.A.S.

offered us money to print it in full color rather than black and white, and it's gorgeous now."

One of G.R.A.S.'s innovations was smart-looking gift packaging, which turned Israeli coins and medals into an impressive gift for business contacts abroad. The Japanese especially like the Masada coin, which they connect with their own Mount Fuji and their tradition of *hara kiri*, says Boxer.

Hidden in the inventory of the ICMC, along with the crates filled with old out-of-circulation coins, the new owners found an overlooked treasure: a trademark - Holyland Mint - registered in 2000 for the historic five-day visit of Pope John Paul II.

Hearts open up to Israeli coins in the most unlikely places. When Boxer travels this year to the Beijing International Coin Exposition he is likely to meet one of the world's most ardent collectors of Israeli coins, Xu Long, the head chef of catering in China's parliament building, the Great Hall of People.

When he isn't cooking Peking Duck, Xu Long devotes his time to his passion - Israeli coins. Xu Long has written a 575-page hardback book in Chinese on the subject, *Money of Ancient Judaea and Israel*. The book has had a place of honor on the bookshelf in Lichtman's office in the Bank of Israel building ever since Xu Long presented Lichtman with a copy during a visit to Israel in 2009. □

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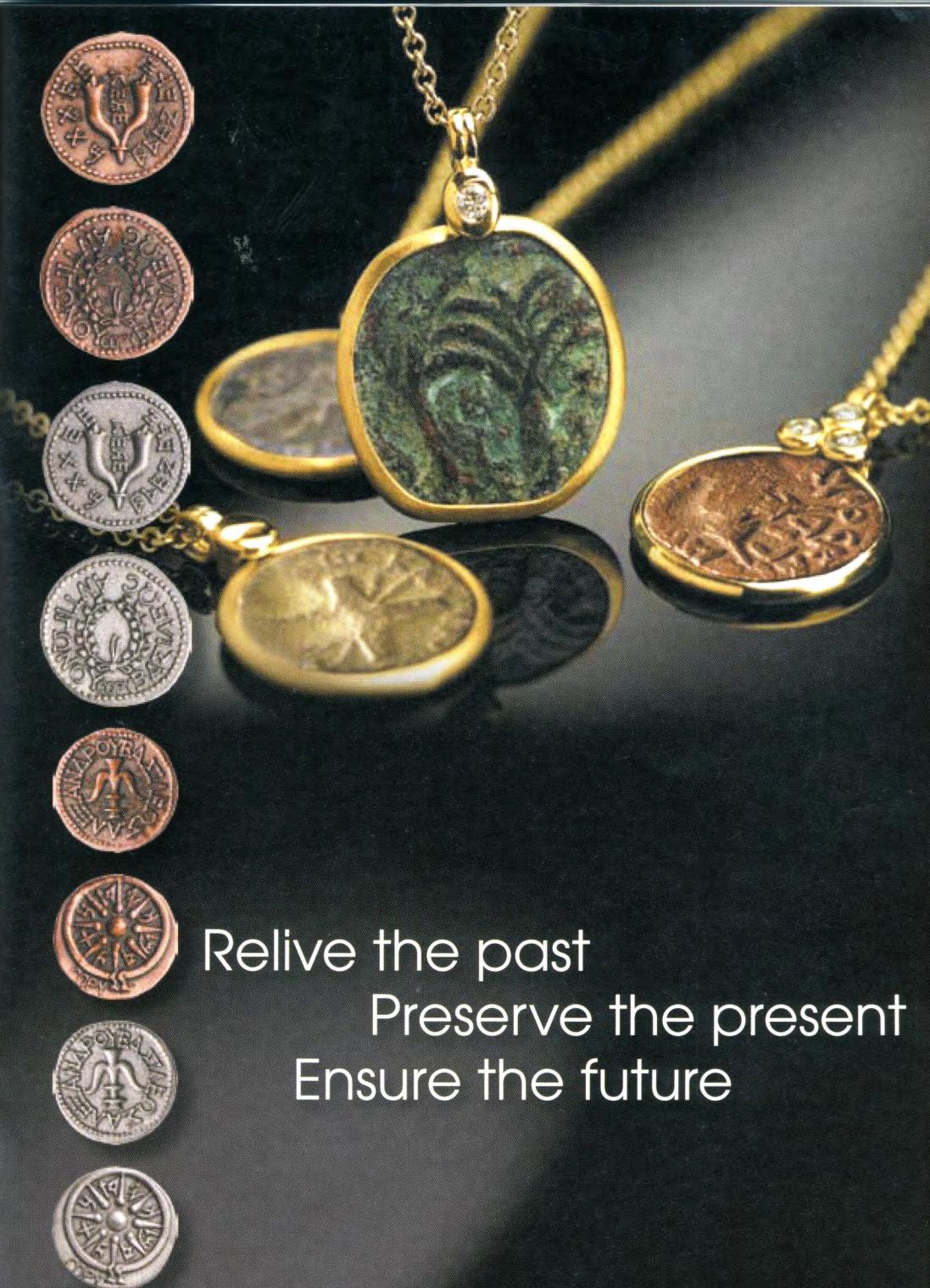
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# Oklahoma!

## Coin Club medal celebrates diversity



A ringed bimetallic medal was issued in 2008 by the Oklahoma City Coin Club to honor its 70th anniversary and the wealth of cultural diversity that gave the club, and the larger community, long life and prosperity.

Rosh Hashonah services were first held in Oklahoma City in 1890. The Hebrew Cemetery Association was founded there in 1902, and in the following year Temple B'nai Israel was organized. Today, Heyman Street, runs through an area in a Federal housing project. *A Jewish Tourists Guide to the U.S.* by Bernard Postal and Lionel Koppman says this street was "named for Seymour Heyman, one of the city's early merchants and civic leaders. Described as 'one of the city builders,' Heyman organized the city's first social agency, headed the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Education, and was one of the pioneer advocates of public education. He was generally

known as 'Mr. Oklahoma City.'"

The Oklahoma City Coin Club issued a medallion to celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2008. Interestingly the Hebrew equivalent of 76 (ayin-vav) is included, along with 71 in Roman numerals, 72 in Arabic, 73 in Sanskrit, 74 in Chinese, 75 in Korean, and the symbol for infinity, along with the legend 70 YEARS AND COUNTING. The languages symbolize the club's multi-national membership and growth since its organization in 1938.

The 39 millimeter bimetallic medal consists of a copper-nickel ring surrounding a brass center. For further information, contact the Oklahoma City Coin Club, P.O. Box 20816, Oklahoma City, OK 73156.▣

# PROFILE: VLADIMIR BERNSHTAM

Vladimir Bernshtam was born in 1952 in the city of Kharkov in the Ukraine into a family of physicians. His father entered the Kharkov Medical Institute after the demobilization from the Soviet Army in 1946, where he served in an anti-aircraft artillery unit of the Red Army from 1939 through WWII on the front lines. It was at the Medical Institute where Vladimir's father met his mother, who had entered the Institute after graduating from secondary school. A strong connection to being Jewish was instilled in Vladimir as a young child from his grandfather, with whom the family lived. Every evening, Vladimir would sit with his grandfather who would listen to a radio program, "Voice of Israel," in Russian.

As a child, Vladimir became involved in becoming a collector through his father, who had started collecting coins at the end of the war in Poland. Together, they began to collect stamps and stamps of Israel in particular. As far back as Vladimir can remember, he and his dad attended a local club of collectors every Sunday where they would search for items needed for their collections. They even managed to acquire some coins from Israel when coins from Israel did not appear anywhere in the Soviet Union until the late 1980s.

It was in 1969 that Vladimir entered the Physics Department of the Kharkov State University and graduated in 1974 with Honors. In 1983, he received a PhD degree in physics and mathematics from Donetsk State University. During his college years, Vladimir met and married Tamara in 1973. Together they have two children, one grandson and one granddaughter. Tamara tolerates his hobby of collecting with a lot of understanding, and together, they have assembled several collections. In Vladimir's own words, "they do everything together."



*Vladimir and Tamara Bernshtam enjoying collecting with their grandchildren.*

The family emigrated to Israel in 1994, and it was in that year that Vladimir joined the Plasma Physics Laboratory of the Weizmann Institute of Science, where he works still to this day. To date, Vladimir has coauthored more than 50 articles in various scientific journals and has 24 inventions.

To Vladimir's regret, it was not possible for him to bring his collections to Israel from Russia, so he has had to start over gathering new coins, banknotes, and stamps. He has also begun collecting badges and insignia of the Israel Defense Forces, and medals and tokens connected with the history of Israel and Jews of the Diaspora. He has also added First Day Covers to enhance his stamp collecting.

In the last few years, Vladimir has started to collaborate with a Russian magazine for collectors entitled, "The Petersburg Collector," in which he has published nearly 10 articles on the collecting of Israeli medals, tokens, and other collection materials.

He has delivered numerous lectures on numismatics and bonistics for children, and together with experts in the field, has taught about the use of coins and banknotes in his teaching of mathematics. But most of all, Vladimir enjoys teaching and sharing his numismatic knowledge with his two grandchildren.

*Written by Donna J. Sims, NLG*

# HERITAGE



Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135 CE).

AR sela (14.36 gm)

Undated, attributed to year 3 (134/5 CE).

Mildenberg 69 (O14/R54). TJC 267a. Hedin 711.

[www.HA.com/3012\\*24546](http://www.HA.com/3012*24546)

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Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135 CE).

Æ 32 mm (27.23 gm).

Year 1 (132/3 CE).

Mildenberg 2 (O1/R2). TJC 220. Hedin 677.

[www.HA.com/3012\\*24553](http://www.HA.com/3012*24553)

Sold for: \$5,463



Jewish War (66-70 CE)

AR shekel (13.88 gm)

Year 3 (68/9 CE)

TJC 202. Hedin 662.

[www.HA.com/3012\\*24539](http://www.HA.com/3012*24539)

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## Judean Highlights of Heritage Auctions' Official Auction at the 2011 NYINC



Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135 CE).

AR sela (14.12 gm)

Undated, attributed to year 3 (134/5 CE).

Mildenberg 87 (O12/R67). TJC 267a. Hedin 711.

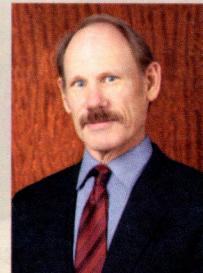
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